

REMARKS

In the Advisory Action dated August 26, 2003, the Examiner refuses to enter the Reply after Final filed on June 5, 2003 because the proposed amendments allegedly introduce new issues. Thus, for purposes of Appeal, claims 1-6 remain rejected.

The Request for Continued Examination (RCE) filed under separate cover herewith requests entry of the Reply after Final filed on June 5, 2003. This Preliminary Amendment cancels claims 2 and 9-11 (which were presented in the Reply after Final), and amends claims 1, 5, and 6. Upon entry of the Reply after Final and this Preliminary Amendment, claims 1 and 3-6 will be pending. No new matter is inserted into the application.

Applicants respectfully submit that the pending claims define patentable subject matter such that this application should be placed into condition for allowance. Early and favorable action on the merits of the present application is thereby requested.

If there are any minor matters precluding allowance of the present application which may be resolved by a telephone discussion, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Kristi L. Rupert, Ph.D. (Reg. No. 45,702) at (703) 205-8000.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any

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overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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